

*The Dignity, and Benefit, of the Priesthood; The
Lawfulness of Marriage in the Clergy; The Hardships
of Them, and their Families, in This Nation; and
The Excellency of the Charity by which they are re-
lieved, &c.*

Set forth in a
S E R M O N
PREACHED before the
SONS of the CLERGY,
AT THEIR
ANNIVERSARY MEETING,
IN THE
CATHEDRAL-CHURCH
O F
St. P A U L,
December 8, 1720.

By JOSEPH TRAPP, M. A.

PUBLISHED at the Request of the STEWARDS
for That Year.

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SEAL

SONS OF THE CLERGY

AT THEIR

ANNUAL MEETING

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To the REVEREND and WORTHY

William Lupton, D. D.	Thomas Croft, M. A.
Thomas Westley, M. A.	John Hill, M. A.
Prebendary of Wells.	

And to the WORTHY

Mr. Samuel Sheppard,	Mr. Thomas Jones,
Mr. James Lisle,	Mr. Thomas Sympson,
Mr. Joshua Symonds,	Mr. George Sibbald,
Mr. John Rogers,	Mr. Thomas Martin,

STEWARDS

For the late FEAST of the

SONS of the CLERGY,

THIS

SERMON,

PREACHED and PRINTED

At Their Request,

Is DEDICATED,

By their most Affectionate,

Humble Servant,

JOSEPH TRAPP.

To the Reverend and Worthy
 William L. Brown, D.D.
 Thomas H. M.A.
 Secretary of the

And to the Worthy
 Mr. Samuel Shepard,
 Mr. James Lyle,
 Mr. John Sturges,
 Mr. George S. Hall,
 Mr. Thomas Munroe,

STEWARDS
 of the



Sons of the
 AMERICAN
 REVOLUTION

PREACHED AND PRINTED
 At Their Request
 IS DEDICATED
 By their most Affectionate
 Example Servant,

JOSEPH TRAPP



2 Kings IV. 1, 2.

Now there cried a certain Woman of the Wives of the Sons of the Prophets unto Elisha, saying; Thy Servant my Husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy Servant did fear the Lord: And the Creditor is come to take unto him my two Sons to be Bondmen.

And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? Tell me, What hast thou in the House? And she said; Thine Handmaid hath not any thing in the House, save a Pot of Oil.

H E Imperfection of our mortal State is in nothing more evident, than in This; that it's very Pleasures are founded upon Pain: As the Pleasure of Eating and Drinking, for example, upon the Pain of Hunger and Thirst. Of the same Truth our present Assembling together is another Instance. For though it be in it self of a festival Nature, attended with sacred Musick in the House of God, and at least, with innocent

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Musick in the House of Feasting ; all which is perfectly proper ; since we meet upon so delightful a Design, as That of promoting the Relief of the Needy, and mutual Love among Our selves : Yet so it is, a melancholy Subject lies at the Root of all ; and our Rejoicing is grounded upon our Mourning : As That Last again is upon the Mourning of Others. The Tears of Widows and Orphans are our Summons to This chearful Meeting : Which yet ought to be a chearful one, because the End of it is to contribute what we can to wipe Those Tears away. The over-ruling Providence of God has been pleased, for Reasons infinitely Wise and Just, to *set These Two, the One over-against the Other* ; as the Royal Preacher expresses himself concerning Prosperity and Adversity.

The very hearing of my Text at This Time, naturally suggests the foregoing Reflection. Since it is entirely applicable to This festival Occasion ; and yet gives us an Historical Account of an Incident, to the last degree distressful. An *holy Man of God* is just dead ; leaving his Family in such miserable Circumstances ; that his Widow is crying out for Help against a Creditor, who, in defect of Money to defray his Debts, is violently seizing upon his two Orphans, and dragging them into Bondage. These are the only Possessions of any Value which he leaves behind him : For his
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Widow being asked what she has *more* to satisfy the Creditor; *What hast thou in the House?* In the Bitterness of her Soul, returns This humble, and modest, and therefore the more moving, Answer; *Thine Handmaid hath not any thing in the House, save a Pot of Oil.* A hopeful Provision for a Widow and two Orphans! besides the discharging of Debts! She has already lost her *Husband*; and *They* their *Father*: And for That very Reason *She* is now upon the point of losing *Them*; and *They* of losing *Themselves*, *i. e.* of becoming Slaves, or being a Part of the Goods and Property of another Family. For (as I before hinted) their Father is so far from leaving any *Effects*, as we speak, to maintain his Children; that (besides the *Pot of Oil* above mentioned) the only *Effects* he leaves, even to pay his Debts, *are Those Children.*

Had Those Obligations been contracted by his own Extravagance, or Neglect; we should greatly blame the Deceased, however we might pity the Survivors. But we are assured, that he was one who *feared the Lord*; a Character utterly inconsistent with That infamous Principle of Wickedness and Folly. *Thy Servant my Husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy Servant did fear the Lord.* Which prepares our Commiseration for the Distress that follows. Those Incumbrances indeed may be, and often are, 'occasioned by a Man's own Vices and Mismanagement: But

Those too, like other Troubles and Afflictions, may, and often do, fall upon Persons strictly Religious, purely by their Misfortune, not at all by their Fault.

By *the Sons of the Prophets*, are meant the Disciples, and Attendants, of the Prophets; Themselves being instituted to, and designed for That Office; and even actually exercising it in some measure, *viz.* as Ministers, or Assistants, to the Prophets, and acting by their Designation, or Appointment. Thus One of them, by the Order of *Elisha*, anointed *Jehu* to be King of *Israel*. *2 Kings* 9. Nay, sometimes (though not so ordinarily) they exercised it directly, and immediately, under God himself. As *1 Kings* 20. 35, & *seqq.* And a certain Man of the Sons of the Prophets said unto his Neighbour in the Word of the Lord, *smite me, I pray thee, &c.* And pronounces a Prophecy, or delivers a Message from God to King *Ahab*, *v.* 42. And he said unto him, *Thus saith the Lord; because thou hast let go out of thine hand a Man whom I appointed to utter Destruction, therefore thy Life shall go for his Life, and thy People for his People.* And not only so, but he is expressly called a Prophet, *v.* 38. and 41. In short, They were an Inferiour Order in the Prophetical College; and much the same to the Superiour Order, or to the Prophets, *commonly*, and *eminently* so called, as Levites to the Priests under the Law, and Deacons to the Priests under

under the Gospel. And since a Part of the Prophetical Office was to *teach*, and *instruct*; which is likewise called *Propheying* in the *New-Testament*; We of the Clergy are in That Respect Prophets, or Sons of Prophets; and so the Text is every way applicable to the present Solemnity.

It was one of This Order therefore, whose Widow makes the pathetical Complaint here mentioned. From which I shall take Occasion briefly to discuss several Particulars; some *directly*, others *collaterally*, or by *Analogy*, tho' *not directly*, deducible from it. Of the former Kind are These. That the *State of Marriage* is not prohibited to Persons of an *holy Function*: — *A Woman of the Wives of the Sons of the Prophets*: That the *Afflictions* of This Life are incident to the *best* of Men, and their Families; — *Thy Servant did fear the Lord, and the Creditor is come, &c.* Lastly, That Those who are *piously* inclined, will be ready to *assist* the *Widows* and *Orphans* of such Persons, especially Those of a *sacred Character*; And *Elisha* said unto her, *what shall I do for thee?* Of the latter Kind are These. That certain *consecrated Orders* of Men are *useful*, and *even necessary*, being *appointed by God himself*; that great is the *Dignity* of their *Office*; and that they ought to be *esteemed* accordingly: This is implied in the Mention of particular Orders, instituted by God, *Prophets*, and *Sons of Prophets*: That
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the *Temporal* Condition of *Spiritual* Persons in This Nation, to which we belong, is, upon the Whole, very *hard* and *unequal*: This I observe, by way of *Accommodation*, from the main Drift and Tenour of the Text; This miserably *impoverished* Man of God, and his *Family*, looking like a *Type* of the *indigent* Clergy of England, and *Theirs*: Lastly, That not only *Spiritual* Persons themselves, but their more *immediate* Relations, are particularly obliged to the *exemplary* Practise of Vertue and Religion: This I deduce from the Widows urging That Argument, *viz.* that her Husband *feared the Lord*; In which it may be imply'd, that She herself was one of the same Character; otherwise she would not be so likely to alledge That Argument. That she thought her self particularly obliged to *exemplary* Vertue by her Relation to her Husband, is not, I acknowledge, so much as hinted: But I take leave to graft This Part of the Observation upon the Other; since it is true in it self, and applicable to the Design of our present Meeting.

I have hitherto mentioned These Propositions, and placed them in *This View*, only to distinguish between Those which are *directly*, and Those which are *indirectly*, deducible from the Words I have chosen; that I may not seem to lay more stress upon a Text, than it will really bear. But I shall, for the Sake of Method, discourse upon them in a
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different Train; so that every subsequent Proposition may *naturally* follow That which immediately precedes it.

I observe therefore,

I. That certain *sacred Orders* of Men are useful, and even necessary, being instituted by God himself; that great is the Benefit and Dignity of their Office; and that they ought to be loved, and honoured accordingly.

II. That the State of *Marriage* is not prohibited to such Orders of Men.

III. That not only such Persons themselves, but their *Families* likewise, are particularly obliged to the Practice of exemplary Piety and Vertue.

IV. That the *Afflictions* of This Life are incident to the *best* of Men, whether Temporal, or Spiritual, and to *their* Families, as well as to others.

V. That the *Temporal* Condition of *Spiritual* Persons, and their Dependants, in This Church and Nation, is, upon the Whole, very hard and unequal.

VI. That good and pious Christians, whether Laity, or Clergy, will, according to their Ability, contribute to *relieve* and support them.

Upon These Heads I shall discourse, as they lie before us; and, in as few Words, as the Importance of them will permit.

I. First then I observe, That certain *sacred Orders* of Men are useful, and even necessary; being instituted by God himself; that great is the Benefit and Dignity of their Office; and that they ought to be loved, and honoured accordingly. I say, I *observe* This: For I pretend not here to *prove* it at large: Nor would there be any Occasion of proving it at all; were every one, who calls himself a Christian, really such. Those among our Adversaries, who believe any thing of the Bible, must, and I think, do acknowledge, that the *Jewish* Prophets and Priests were by Divine Institution; because That People was under the immediate, and even visible, Inspection of God himself. And the same they are pleased to grant of the Apostles, and Others who had the Gift of working Miracles; under the Gospel Dispensation. But as We have no such direct and particular Revelations, nor any such extraordinary Powers; they imagine that they have

have room to object against the Commission of our Ministry, said to be derived through so many Ages by a continued and regular Succession. They may indeed object against This; and we cannot help it. But whoever shall consider, that our Blessed Saviour promised his Apostles to be *with them always, even unto the End of the World*; which could not be meant of their own Persons only, since they did not continue in the World any longer than other Men: That Those Apostles, confessed on all hands to be divinely inspired, did conceive themselves authorized, not only to ordain Others, but to communicate to them the Power of Ordaining, as appears (to pass over many more Instances) from That of St. Paul to Timothy, *Lay hands suddenly on no man*: That they actually did both execute, and delegate such a Commission, if they may be allowed to understand their own Meaning: And Lastly, That the same has in Fact, by universal Practice, and continued Succession, been delivered downwards, from the Beginning of Christianity to This Day; Whoever, I say, shall consider all This, and yet deny, or so much as question, the Divine Commission of Us, who at This Day call ourselves the Ministers of Christ, must either be a Hypocrite while he pretends to believe any thing of the Gospel; or one of Those perverse Opiniatres, who dispute about

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every thing, and therefore are not fit to be disputed with about any thing.

But the Truth of the Matter is, Those who deny the Authority of Christ's Ministers, are really not true Christians: It appearing from the whole Tenour of the Scriptures, that such an Authority is blended with the very Vitals and Essence of the Religion we profess. The same Sort of Arguments which prove the Truth of Christianity, prove the Truth and Necessity of sacred Orders in general, and even of Episcopacy in particular: They are all Three Points of *Fact*, not of *Reason*: And if we can baffle the Evidence, given by History, and universal Tradition, for the Two Last, we effectually overturn the Foundations of the First.

Not but that from Reason, joined with, and arguing from Revelation, we may clearly evince the Necessity of That for which we are contending. The Apostle assures us, that sa-

Ephef. 4.12. cred Orders were instituted *for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the Body of Christ*. And is not That Edifying, and Perfecting, as necessary in One Age, as in Another? In This of Ours, as in That of the Apostles? Original Sin has made it necessary, that there should be a Mediator between God and Man: This is Jesus Christ, who has substituted inferiour Mediators under him, to transact between God and Man upon Earth, as he himself does in Heaven.

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We are his Ministers, his Ambassadors, as he is King : His Priests, as he is High-Priest ; and his Deputy-Teachers, as he is Prophet. All Kings, High-Priests, Chief Prophets, must necessarily, and in the Nature of Things, have their Substitutes to act under them ; especially where They themselves do not personally reside. Original Sin therefore, which is the Source of Actual, has render'd the Office of Priesthood necessary. But the Mischief is, These Men do not believe Original Sin : Tho' upon a Supposal of it the whole Oeconomy of the Redemption by Jesus Christ is entirely founded. They acknowledge, (as I observed) that among the *Jews*, the Divine Authority of Priesthood was clear ; because it was appointed by God himself, personally and miraculously residing in the Midst of them. And yet even among Them, there were not wanting Some, who affirmed, that *all the Congregation* Numb. 16. 3. *were holy, every one of them* ; or, in the latter Dialect, That no Man has more Right to execute the Office of a Priest, than Another. But we know what was the Consequence of This : And our modern Rebels would do well to consider, that They *may perish in the Gainsaying of Korah*, though in a different Manner ; that the Sin is still the same, notwithstanding miraculous Punishments are ceased ; that a Man may *go into the Pit*, even into the *bottomless Pit*, though

the Earth does not open her Mouth, and cleave asunder under them.

The Objections of the *Romanists* against the Validity of our Orders in This Church, (however backed and fortify'd by Some among Ourselves, who make a Show of more than ordinary Zeal against Popery) have been abundantly refuted by learned Men; who were willing to answer even the most frivolous Cavils; though at the same time they well knew, that they did them more Honour than they deserved: They being founded upon a Calumny, in point of Fact, so groundless, and childish; that it is hard to say, Whether the Fable of the *Nag's-Head*, urged by the Papists against the Church of *England*, or That of the *Asses's-Head*, urged by the Heathen against the Primitive Christians, be the more senseless and ridiculous Story of the Two.

The *Benefits* conveyed by Means of our Ministry are truly inestimable; if Remission of Sins, Spiritual Grace, and the Kingdom of Heaven, may be so accounted. Not that we pretend to confer them *directly*, or to have them at *our own Disposal*, to be granted, or denied, at our Will and Pleasure; or that they *cannot possibly* be conferred without us: All This is Scandal upon us; among a thousand other Slanders, by which we are daily misrepresented, that we may be render'd odious to the People.

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But we *are*, and we do pretend to be, the ordinary, standing Means, or Instruments, through which, by God's Appointment, Those Benefits are conveyed. And This surely shews our Office to be highly beneficial.

As for the *Dignity* of it; To omit innumerable Texts of Scripture, which might be cited to the same Purpose, No *man* (says the Apostle) *taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is ordained of God, as was Aaron.* And in another Place, *We beseech you, Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake.* *Heb. 5. 4.*
1 Thess. 5. 12, 13.

To apply This then to the Consciences of Some in These Times: If They are to be *honoured*, why are they *despised*? If they are to be *loved*, why are they *hated*? It will be said, perhaps, not upon the Account of their Office, but of their personal Behaviour. This is to be considered, under my Fifth general Head. At present I say, that if it were true (as it is most false) it is no Answer for Those of whom I am now chiefly speaking: Because They hate, and despise, (or rather *really hate, and pretend to despise*) Priests as Priests. Else how comes That refreshing Word *Priestcraft* to be thrown out so frequently, and with so important an Emphasis,

phasis, as if it were equivalent to an hundred Arguments? Are they not perpetually abusing and ridiculing our Office it self, and as such? Has not a certain Word in our Language (like the Word *Tyrannus*, and Others, in the *Latin*) by the Iniquity and Prophaneness of the Times, changed its Signification; so as from a Title of Dignity, to become a Name of Ignominy and Scorn? Insomuch, that though a Man be not only by his Education, and Abilities, and all fine Accomplishments, both natural, and acquired, but by noble Birth, and even temporal Fortune, far superiour to These Scoffers; yet his being a *Parson*, for which they ought to honour him more than for any other Character, or than for all the rest put together, so degrades him, and renders him vile in their Eyes; that it takes off from That Respect, which upon other Accounts they would otherwise pay him. Such Magick is there in the Sound of That poor despised Word: The Seal and Stamp of God's Authority, is, it seems, a Thing so contemptible in the Opinion of These Men. But They will deny that we have such Authority: And I say, we have again and again proved that we have; Let them answer our Arguments, I mean, really answer them, *i. e.* with Reason, instead of Scurrility; and we will be silent upon the Subject. In the mean time, they must give
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us Leave to think, and say too, that at least, the most Learned, and Knowing among them, would, if they were able, offer the same Insults to God himself, as they do to his Ministers. For thus maliciously to persecute Those whom they *know* to be so, and *because they are* so; what is it, but in the worst of Senses, to *defy the armies of the living God*, to dart their Outrages in the Face of Heaven, and declare a Kind of War against Omnipotence? So true is That of our Blessed Saviour, which in These dangerous Days can scarce be too frequently inculcated, and apply'd to the Successors of the Apostles, of whom it is as true as it was of the Apostles themselves; *He that despiseth you, despiseth me;* Luke 10. 16. *and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.* And the same is to be said of *hating*, as of *despising*.

I pass the Practice of all Ages and Nations, Heathen, as well as Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian; by which it appears, that to love, and honour These sacred Offices, and the Persons who bear them, is a Principle of *natural*, as well as of *revealed* Religion. To what has been said, I only add This Consideration, (hinted at before) That he who is God, as well as Man, is Priest and Prophet, as well as King. This, I confess, is no Argument with Those of our Adversaries, who deny his Divinity, and per-

perhaps his Being : However, even from Them we may make This Observation, That the Chief of Those who are Enemies to These sacred Orders of Men, are at the same time Enemies to the Saviour who redeemed them, and to the God who made them.

And so I pass on to my Second Observation from the Text, *viz.*

II. That the State of *Marriage* is not prohibited to such Orders of Men. If it be forbidden in Scripture ; it lies upon our Adversaries to tell us *Where* it is so : For according to the Laws of Arguing, We are not to prove that it is *not* forbidden, but They are to prove that it *is*. Yet in This Case, we can, with great Ease, do more than They can reasonably demand of us. The Example of my Text is clear, and plain : As are those of *Samuel*, *Ezekiel*, and Others in the *Old Testament*, and of *St. Peter* in the *New* : Who are all known to have been Married Men. As plain is the Doctrine of *St. Paul*, concerning the Wives and Children of Bishops and Deacons : As also the Practice of the Primitive Church, and of all Churches, except That of *Rome*, since it became corrupt by so many shameful Innovations, both in Doctrine, and Practice. Among which, That of imposing Yokes, and laying Snares is none of the least considerable. And the Necessity of Celibacy in the

the Clergy is a signal Instance of Both. 'Tis an arbitrary, tyrannical, unlawful Imposition; and a Snare to the Consciences of Men. Ecclesiasticks are moulded out of the same common Mass with Laicks; and Human Nature is the same in Those as in These. In the *Jewish* Church, Priests were not only permitted to marry; but the Priesthood it self was hereditary. And whether among *Jews*, or Christians, it would be very wonderful, if a State sanctify'd by God, in the State of Man's Innocency, should be improper, and even unlawful for Men, who are sanctify'd by him, and for him; Or that what is the Type of the Union between Christ and his Church, should be prohibited to Those who are the Ministers of the First, for the Edification of the Last. As to the Church of *Rome* in particular; it is to be admired, that She who pretends to a Supremacy over all other Churches, upon the Foundation of *St. Peter*, should so strangely overlook his Example in This Instance. And that She who calls Marriage a Sacrament, should think any Sacrament fit to be *given* by a Priest, which is not fit to be *received* by him. In the *Eucharist*, (according to her Doctrine and Practice) Part of it is to be received by the Priest only: So that she denies Half of one Sacrament to the Laity, and another whole one (as she calls it) to the

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Clergy:

Clergy : Both by her own Authority ; and without any manner of Foundation, either in Reason, Scripture, or Antiquity.

How far the Celibacy of Ecclesiasticks in That Church may have affected their Morals, I will not pretend to determine. Many Reflections, we know, have been cast upon them : But though I charitably hope, and verily believe, they are not all true ; yet This is certain, that it would be better, if in all Churches where there have been *Sons*, and *Daughters*, there had likewise been *Wives*, of the *Clergy*.

Against the Marriage of whom the Civil Society at least, can make no reasonable Objection : Since the Former, by their Children give so many Pledges to the Latter : And by reason of Intermarriages between the Families of Spiritual, and Temporal Persons, the State and the Church may mutually apply to each other That of *David to Amasa*, *Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh ?* Whereas the Church of *Rome*, by injoining Celibacy upon her Clergy, seems to set up an Interest, not only separate from the secular Government, but in Opposition to it. And however the Powers of the Church and of the State may be (as they certainly are) in their original Institution, not only distinct from, but independent of each other ; there is no doubt, but that the more their Interests are intermingled, the more likely are Both to prosper and flourish.

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One great Advantage in the married State of the Clergy, is their fuller *Knowledge of the World*, and their being experimentally acquainted with the various Turns and Habitudes of human Nature. So that Those of all Relations to whom Many of us minister, may in some measure, and by way of humble remote Analogy, apply to Us what the Apostle observes concerning the High Priest of our Profession; *We have not Priests who cannot be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities,* Heb. 4. 15. *but are in all Points tempted, like as we are.* We cannot go on, and add, yet without Sin: That is not without Falshood to be affirmed, nor almost without Blasphemy to be imagined. God knows *in many Things we offend all*; Clergy, as well as Laity, and the Best of Both. We are not only tempted, but often foil'd by Temptation. Nor does our admitting That Word, as apply'd to Marriage, in the least derogate from the Truth of what I observe under This Head. Nay, I acknowledge, (and shall have Occasion to take Notice of it again before I conclude) that the Inconveniences which attend a marry'd Clergy, are many, and great; and that sundry Temptations are adapted to That very State of Life as such. But This is nothing to the Point: All Conditions in This World are subject to Temptations,

tations, and Inconveniences, to Corruption, and Sin: And however what the Apostle intimates concerning Marriage, with relation to all Christians, especially in times of Persecution, may be particularly apply'd to the Clergy in all Times, *He that marrys does well, and he that marrys not does better,* provided he be well assured, that he can avoid the Dangers attending a single Life; I say, however true This may be, the only Questions to our Purpose are These Two; Whether, any Power upon Earth has Authority to make That unlawful *in point of Morality*, which God left indifferent? And, Whether as the Inconveniences are great on one Side; so, all things considered, they are not greater on the other? As to the Latter, the Allowance of This State to the Clergy appears to be least exceptionable in point of Prudence and Expediency. And as to the Former, to make it directly unlawful to any Order of Men, is certainly the Height of Presumption: And we may with some Variation apply to This Case Those Words of our blessed Saviour, concerning Marriage in general; *What God hath at least permitted to be join'd together, let not Man absolutely put asunder.*

III. My Third Observation was This: That not only spiritual Persons Themselves, but their *Families* likewise are particularly obliged

obliged to the Practice of exemplary Piety and Vertue. That such Persons *Themselves* are so obliged, is acknowledged on all Sides, and too plain to be questioned. And one Duty, among others, which is so incumbent upon them, is That of promoting Piety in their Families, and educating their Children *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*: Lest they incur the Guilt of the old High Priest *Eli*, against whom the severest Judgment was denounced, because *his Sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.* *Sam. 3. 13.* And This more than ordinary Obligation upon the Master of the House induces a more than ordinary one likewise upon Those of his Household. The One flows from the Other: Because the better any one is taught, the more he is obliged to learn, and practise.

But besides This, their very near Relation to a Person of a sacred Character, is a peculiar Tye upon their Consciences; because by Means of That Relation they are more likely than other Laicks, to *give Offence*, and to prejudice Religion by their ill Behaviour. *St. Paul* gives especial Directions concerning the Behaviour of the Wives of Deacons: And they are more strongly applicable to Those of Priests, and Bishops; and by Parity of Reason, to the Children of all Three. Who all ought seriously to ponder in their Minds, and apply to Themselves Those

Words

Rom. 11. 16.

Words of the Apostle : *If the Root be holy, so are the Branches :* And

Isai. 51. 1.

Those of the Prophet, *Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the Pit whence ye are digged.* The

1 Cor. 7. 14.

Apostle teaches us, that the Children of all Christians are, as such, holy in one Sense ; *viz.* as they are even in their Infancy capable of being baptiz'd : But the Children of Christ's Ministers are doubly sanctify'd, not only by the common Faith, but by the peculiar Function, of their Fathers.

But as the best Things are capable of being abused, and the Corruption of the best is always the worst ; it may *accidentally* happen, that such Children may be *unholy* upon the very Account of their Extraction : Which is no Wonder ; since the same Thing may, and sometimes does, happen to their Fathers, upon the very Account of their Function, *What should have been for their Health may be unto them an Occasion of falling :* The Spiritual Food, and Physick, given them by their Parents, may be perverted to Poison ; and their very Religious Education make them wicked. Thus Christianity it self, which by its natural Efficacy tends to Peace, does (as its Blessed Author foretold it would) sometimes *by Accident* cause Division. There are Temptations particularly adapted to the Children of Clergymen, Those of them, for Instance, who are placed in the lower Part of Life, in mechanical, or other

other mean Occupations, being by their Education more knowing, and more religious than Persons of the *same Craft* generally are, may be tempted to Pride, and That the worst Sort of it Spiritual Pride; and, as a Consequence of This, to That most unchristian Vice *Censoriousness*; may be apt to *exercise themselves in great Matters which are too high for them*; to despise their Equals, and be insolent to their Superiours; to be impatient under Afflictions, and ungrateful to their Benefactors. Against These, and such like, Corruptions they ought to be carefully guarded; earnestly to pray God, that the good Seed sown by their Parents may not be lost upon bad Ground; sincerely to repent of any Misbehaviour they may have been guilty of in any of These Respects; and seriously to consider the *Deceitfulness of Sin*; which is such, that, without great Care and Caution on our Part, it may turn our very Advantages to our Detriment: So that the Children of Clergymen may for That very Reason, joined with others, be *twofold more the Children of Hell*. They may likewise be scornful, and fastidious, to mean Trades; because in their Father's Family they were *better* bred: Not considering, that, to ballance This, they were *religiously* bred too; taught Meekness, and Humility, Contentment in low Circumstances, and Patience in distressful ones;

ones; that the blessed Apostles of their Saviour were Fishers, Tentmakers, and the like; and their Saviour himself the reputed Son of a Carpenter.

Another Fault, though not peculiar to *Them* only, of which Some among them are said to be guilty, (and which, if they are, I am sure they ought to reform) is especially to be mentioned upon the Occasion of our present Meeting; because it relates to their indigent Circumstances. I mean Those of *Them* (if such there be) who, if there be One among them who is Himself a Clergyman, are unreasonable in their Expectances from him, and make him ungrateful Returns for what they have already received. Because he is a Clergyman, they imagine they have a Right to lay any Loads upon him; whether he be able to bear them or no; and are continually reminding him, that he is bound in Duty to support his Collateral Relations. No doubt he is so, if it be in his Power, and if it be consistent with his superiour Obligations to Others: But of That He is to judge, not They; Though they may have Presumption enough to instruct Him from whom they ought in Meekness and Humility to receive Instruction. According to Their Doctrine, That of the Scripture is revers'd; and a Man, instead of *leaving even his Father, and his Mother, and cleaving to his Wife, must leave*

leave his *Wife* and *Children*, and cleave to his *Brothers* and *Sisters*.

I must confess indeed, (if I may take Occasion from hence to make a little Digression) that, in my humble Opinion, the above-mentioned Law, if we understand it of any Thing more than *local* Leaving, which indeed I believe is all that is strictly and literally intended by it, does not take place with regard to a Man's *Father* and *Mother*, as compared with his *Children*; however it may with regard to his *Wife*: As to the Latter it takes place, in respect of Those Contracts or Agreements which were made before Marriage. That it obliges with Reference to These, must be granted; because no Charity is truly such, which is founded upon Injustice. But as to one's Parents compared with one's Children, my Meaning is This, (and it affects Laity and Clergy in common) If both be equally indigent, (and other Circumstances equal, or very near it) the Former have the first Title or Claim to our Assistance. The Nearness of Blood is the same in Both: And though it be commonly said, that natural Affection rather descends, than ascends; yet I doubt This is no good Principle of Human Nature. Among Brutes, indeed it is in Fact so: But the Case here is quite different, for Reasons too plain to be insisted upon: And our Rational Faculties were given us to correct the Errours of the Animal Ones. Whe-

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ther the natural Yearnings, in Men of the best Temper, be stronger to the Parent, or to the Child, is not easy to determine: But This is undoubted, that the Obligation to the First is prior and superiour: And we are not so much obliged to Those whom we educate, as to Those by whom we were educated ourselves. There is in Nature and Reason something more emphatical in our *Duty* to the *Former*, than to the *Latter*: The one is called *Piety*, the other barely *Duty*; And Those Words of the wise Man must surely draw Tears from all good Christians, when their Parents are in Poverty and Distress; *Hearken unto thy Father*
Prov. 23. 22. that begat thee, and despise not thy Mother when she is old.

But to return from This Digression; If the Children of God's Ministers are particularly obliged to be *holy in all manner of Conversation*; what is to be said of Those among them, who turn Profligates, and Libertines, both in Principles, and Practice, on purpose to disown their Parentage? Why we must say of them, that from being *ashamed of one's Glory*, it is a short Step to *glorying in one's Shame*: Which is the last Degree of Wickedness. Some of the most envenomed Arrows that have of late Years been shot against the Church and Religion, have, as it is said, been drawn from the Quivers of Those who are Sons of her Ministers. If it be asked, why
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may not Both be furiously and openly attacked by Some, who, notwithstanding their Extraction, are mere Laicks, as well as undermined, and in a great measure even openly (though not so furiously) assaulted by Others, who are not only *Clergymen's Sons*, but *Clergymen themselves*: I leave the Answer to the Persons concerned; and say no more of the Thing it self *at present*; but proceed to my Fourth Observation, which was This, *viz.*

IV. That the Afflictions of This Life are incident to the Best of Men, whether Spiritual, or Temporal; and to *their* Families, as well as to Others. This needs no Proof: Nor should I have laid down This Head, but for the sake of its Connexion with what precedes, and follows it. The Example in my Text is plain: Religion and Experience concur, to verify This Proposition. This World neither is, nor was ever intended to be, a State of Reward and Punishment, but of Trial. Here, as the *race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favour to men of skill*, so neither is Reward to the Righteous, nor Punishment to the Wicked; but *Time and Chance happens to them all*. There is indeed in the *New Testament* something of Promise as to Temporals, though not much: But it is not my Business to discuss This Point at present.

I only observe, that *Spiritual* good Men, and *Their* Families, are no more exempt from the Calamities of This Life, than *Temporal*. The Tribe of *Levi*, however separated from the rest of Mankind in other Respects, is not at all separated from them in This. And yet a certain popular Saying, that the Children of Clergymen (as distinguished from Those of the Laity) are generally unfortunate, is full as easily denied by Some, as affirmed by Others. Nevertheless certain it is, that, taking things in gross, the secular Circumstances of Them, and of their Parents, are in This Part of the World bad enough. Which leads me to my Fifth Observation, *viz.*

V. That the Temporal Condition of *Spiritual* Persons, and of their Families in This Church and Nation, is, upon the Whole, very hard and unequal. The Hardships under which the Clergy labour, are of Two Kinds; Those which are imputable to the accidental Corruption of the Age in which we now live, and relate not only to their Fortunes, but likewise to their Reputation, their Studies, and the whole Course of their Ministry: And Those which relate to their Fortunes only, by the Necessity of our Constitution *it self*, ever since a very Material Change was made in it. The Last mentioned only are immediately and directly to be accommodated to the

the Design of my Text, and of our present Assembly: But the First are by no means *forreign to our Purpose*; and are too considerable to be passed over in Silence, upon This publick and solemn Occasion.

In Those Respects then the Ministers of the Gospel in our Church are ill treated; because the Church, and the Gospel it self, are so: For the Sake of which, we are calumniated to such a Degree, that we are obliged to be continually making *Defences* (or, as they were anciently called, *Apologies*) for our selves; like Those of the primitive Fathers to the Heathen Emperors, and Magistrates, in Times of Persecution. For there may be Persecution, or something very like it, from private Persons, as well as from the higher Powers. The Time would fail us; should we go about to give a Detail of Instances exemplifying the Treatment we receive from some Men. I say from *some Men*: For even in These licentious Times the *generality* of the People have a great Love and Reverence for the Church and Clergy: And Many of the Gentry and Nobility are not only *affectionate*, and *respectful*, (for so I trust, and believe, Most of them are) but *liberal*, and *munificent*, to Both. The Lord remember Them, and Theirs, concerning This; and eternally reward their good Will to *Sion*. But then too many have exceeding *evil Will* at *Sion*: And without *Restraint* or
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Controul expresse it in the most *publick* and *insolent* Manner; representing the Ministers of Christ in This Church, as the worst and vilest of Mankind; even worse, (if possible) than *they Themselves really are*: Making it their whole Employment and Study to blacken and traduce them, by *charging* them with what is *false*, and *monstrously aggravating* what is *true*; laying the Faults of the *Worst* among them upon the *Best*; of *Some* upon *All*, and of the *Persons* upon the *Function* itself. Nay, so far does their Malice blind them; that their Slanders are inconsistent in their Nature; and by abusing Us, they contradict one another, and very often *Themselves*. Thus for Instance, the main Body of the Clergy are represented as sordidly covetous, and profusely luxurious; sneakingly mean spirited, and insolently proud; crafty as Serpents, more silly than Doves; formidable for their Wealth and Power, contemptible for their Poverty and Weakness. In short, *Priests, wicked Priests*, is the Outcry of the whole Party: Insomuch, that were a *Stranger* in our *Israel* to receive no Information concerning us, but what he has from the Conversation, and Writings of such as These; He must send his Thoughts to *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* for a Parallel with the Generality of the *English* Clergy. Let Heaven and Earth, God and Man, even the Consciences of These Accusers

fers Themselves be Witnesses, whether the Character They give be really true ; nay, whether the very Reverse of it be not true : And if so, whether there were ever any Age or Nation, in which so many Thousands of innocent, pious, and holy Men, whose constant Business and Labour is to save Souls, even the Souls of their most bitter Enemies, for whom they continually offer up their Prayers to the Throne of Grace, who by their Office are *Servants of the most High God*, Most of them with Meekness and Patience struggling under extreme hard Circumstances, All of them as to temporal Regards weak and defenceless, were ever with such unchristian Prophaneness, with such unmanly Baseness and Cowardise, with such inhuman Cruelty, with such Diabolical Malice, outraged and insulted ? All of them have their Infirmities, and even their many and grievous Sins : The Best of them are *but Men* ; and Some of them, no doubt, very wicked Men : For the *Last*, let *Them* look to it, and be assured that they will most severely answer *for* it. But what is That to the Purpose ? Is our Case an Exception, in which it is good Logick to argue from Particulars to Universals ? The Apostles themselves were not only Men, but sinful Ones : All of them were so ; and One of them was the worst Man that ever lived. And we may, I am sure, with

with great Modesty affirm, that not One in Twelve among our Clergy is near so wicked as *Judas Iscariot*. Yet I never heard, that *His* being a *Traytor* was any Slur upon the other eleven Apostles.

I will only observe further, That what our Adversaries object concerning the ill Lives of Some, and the Infirmities of All, who minister in holy Things, is a most prophane Reflection upon the Wisdom of God himself; in making *mere Men* his more immediate Servants, and committing so rich a *Treasure to Earthen Vessels*.

As there are but Three great Concerns in which Mankind can be affected, their Estates, their Bodies, and their Souls; to answer These, there are so many Professions, or Faculties appointed, Lawyers, Physicians, and Divines: Only with This Difference, the two First are from Men, the Last from God. And do the two First meet with the same ill Usage as the Last? They do not; and God forbid they should: But what should be the Reason of This? Why because Men value their Estates, and their Bodies, more than they do their Souls; because the World is wicked, irreligious, Atheistical: And the Wit of Man cannot assign any other adequate Reason. For without detracting from the real Honour and Benefit of Those noble and useful Faculties, it is certain that the Other is
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the greatest of the Three; if Heaven be superiour to Earth, and Time less considerable than Eternity. And without reflecting upon any other Profession, or Body of Men, much less upon the Laity in general; we may justly add, that as the Clergy in an especial manner *profess* Religion, so they in an especial manner *practise* it: And I appeal to the Experience of the whole Kingdom, for the Truth of This Assertion. The Contempt of the Clergy therefore proceeds from the Contempt of Religion: And That again proceeds not so much from the Vices of the Clergy, as from the Vices of Those who despise and hate them. I say, *not so much*: For we are very ready to acknowledge, that if Any among Us are notoriously vicious, They greatly contribute towards it: For which (as I said before) They must severely answer. And we leave This Subject at present, with That Observation of our Blessed Saviour: *It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.* Mat. 18. 7.

And as the Ministers of Christ in This Church are neither to be hated, nor despised, upon the Account of their Behaviour; so I hope we may with Modesty presume to say, that they are not *very contemptible* in other Respects. It is a publick Truth, and acknowledged by every body in all Nations of the World, except Some in our own,

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that the Clergy of England, and her two famous Universities (in which the Sons of the Prophets are bred) have made their Country the Glory of all Lands. If, in These degenerate Times, they in some degree partake of the common Contagion, and are more and more corrupted; our Adversaries may be silent upon That Article: because that they are so, is chiefly, if not solely, to be imputed to Them, and their Principles.

To declaim against the Wickedness of the Age, is, I am sensible, the easiest, the dullest, and the most unpleasant Subject in Nature: And did we preach only to please Men, and to serve, or recommend our selves; it would certainly be the Last we should make choice of. But alas! That is a wretched Principle for a Minister of Jesus Christ, in the Execution of his Office. As we act upon other Views, we are constrained to observe, upon This Article concerning the Hardships of the Clergy proceeding from Those of Religion, that Heresy, Infidelity, and Atheism it self were never propagated as they are Now; and that they are advanced to such a Pitch of bare-faced Impudence, as would be endured by no Nation under the Sun professing Christianity, except our own. The Limits of our Time allotted for This Service permit me not so much as to mention the several Particulars. And I have more-over This unhappy

happy Excuse, that the Notoriety of the Facts renders it superfluous. One Thing it is much if we do not observe, in *Consequence* of These Abominations, that amidst our Controversies with one another (let *Those* see to it, who made them necessary) *God's Controversy* with the Nation in general, which has been a very long one, seems now to be drawing towards a Conclusion. And, without pretending in the predictive Sense, to be either *Prophets*, or *Sons of Prophets*, we may say, that in all Appearance he has something very extraordinary ready to be discharged upon us; and that without a speedy, and wonderful Reformation, (of which there seems to be little Hope) it is morally impossible that he should forbear us much longer.

And here again (as in point of Practice, of which we have spoken before) it were to be wished, that the whole *Tribe of Levi* were entirely free from Infection. But as Some of them (though, God be prais'd, but very Few) have published their Names to the whole World, assuring us of the contrary; we must be forced to acknowledge what, if it were possible, we would industriously conceal. Since it is not possible; the only Way to do our Duty to God, and Justice to Ourselves, is as publicly and openly to protest against *Those* of our own Profession; who would do well to consider,

how much it tends to their Reputation, to have their Praises celebrated by the Tongues and Pens of Infidels and Atheists. As to the Honour of our Function in general; the foolish Arguing from Particulars to Universals, and from Persons to Things, has been already taken notice of. Were we only attacked from Without, not betrayed from Within; the united Powers of Earth and Hell could not hurt our Cause. Its professed Enemies would scarce be formidable; were it not for Traditors among our selves. So true is That Observation, *Nothing can ruin the Church, but the Church*: Meaning by the Latter, Those of her Ministers, who either openly oppose, or secretly undermine, both her temporal and spiritual Interests. Setting aside These, we might securely bid Defiance to the Powers of Darknes, to the Enemies of God and his Church; stand firm in one compacted Body, impenetrable to their Assaults; and be *terrible* against them *as an Army with Banners*. But, by the just Judgment of God, for our manifold Provocations, it happens to be otherwise: And we have, besides, This, Misfortune, that by reason of the Corruption, Vices, and Follies of the World, one bad Member among Us can do more Mischief, than many sound ones can do Good. The Doctrine of the most holy, and ever blessed *Trinity*, has been impugn'd by Some, who might have

have made a better Use of their Talents, than by denying the Deity of Him who gave them. Others have argued against the *Authority* of the *Church*, the very Being of their *own Order*, and all the *Fences of Religion*, whether *Ecclesiastical*, or *Civil*: Advancing such prodigious Paradoxes upon These Subjects; that we are at a loss to determine, whether their Impiety be more detestable, or their Absurdity more ridiculous; and so whether they ought to be answered by Argument, or neglected with Contempt: Thus leaving us in a Strait between Wickedness and Nonsense; the only Dilemma of any Moment they are able to put upon us. The most considerable of them have been over and over confuted, to a Demonstration: Confuted I say; for I despair of their ever being silenced: For the rest, I hope Nobody will be found so very idle, as to honour them with any Confutation at all.

I will only observe This of them in common, from the smallest to the greatest, that as they are not really *of us*, it would be kind in them to *go out from among us*; And, by the way, were Church-Discipline in full Force, I am sure they had long since been *driven out from among us*. If they must fight for our Enemies, let it be under *Their Colours*, not *Ours*: They would be more just to Us, and (especially upon their boasted

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Principle of *Sincerity*) more consistent with Themselves, if they would no longer *bear* an Office which according to their Doctrine, is *unlawful*; nor *wear the Habit* of an Order which they do their utmost to *destroy*.

It would be just too, if These, and all other our Adversaries, whether Within, or Without, would not still charge Us with *breaking the Peace*; when They are the Aggressors, and We are upon the Defensive; when They are for introducing something New, and We are yet in Possession of the Old; when They are a Few single Persons obtruding their own private Notions upon the Publick, and We are the main Body defending the Constitution of the Church, and the common Principles of Christianity. For the same Reasons it ill becomes Them to upbraid Us with intemperate *Heat*, and *Violence*, *Rudeness*, *Insolence*, and *Scurrility* in our Disputes with them: Especially since They treat the whole Church with the last Degree of Haughtiness and Scorn: Besides the Arrogance, and contemptuous Behaviour, even of the *most moderate* among them, towards Some in *particular* of the most shining Lights in our Church; *One*, especially, of her *chief Ministers*, who, of all Men living, cannot be charged with excessive Passion; and whose great *Learning*, and *Piety*, will ever be respected

spected by All, but Those who have nothing, or not much, of Either:

We would farther intreat them to ask their own Consciences, whether they are sure they strictly adhere to Truth; while they go on in the old way of taxing Us with being *Popishly affected*: Whether they do not believe that We are *at least as* averse from the Corruptions of *Rome*, as Themselves: Whether Our Principles do not tend to keep out Popery, and Theirs to bring it in: Whether in Fact many more, than is usual in the same Space of Time, have not been perverted to it, since the late Propagation of Their Doctrines; and whether there be not a very good Reason to be given for it: Whether Those of our Church whom They condemn have not always been the greatest and most formidable Champions against Popery: And lastly, whether there be no Medium between a Papal Infallibility, and That Ecclesiastical Authority for which We contend. I am indeed neither ashamed nor afraid to say, that, in some things, Papists (corrupt as they are, and Nothing can well be more corrupt) have been falsely accused by Protestants: and that in some, on the other hand, Protestants have been justly accused by Papists; particularly in the Instance of too much relaxing Ecclesiastical Discipline, and Want of Respect to Priests and Priesthood.

hood. Against which, and others, which might be named, we have nothing to alledge with Reason or Truth, but to wish we could give a better Answer, than That old, trite, and yet very emphatical, Saying, continually cited in such Cases;

*Pudet hac opprobria nobis
Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.*

I am well aware that Reflections of This Kind are apt to be censured not only by *All* our *Enemies*, but by *Some* of our *Friends*; and *Some* of These too even among the Clergy themselves: to be censured at least as *rash*, and *improper*; and tending, at best, to do more harm, than good. I have already in a great measure obviated This Objection; but would farther beg them seriously to consider, that as there is a *rash*, and a *false* Zeal, so there is a *prudent*, and a *true* one; that *all* *Prudence* does not consist in *Silence*, and *Inactivity*, no nor in *Caution* it self; that we are to preach the Word of God in the Plainness and Simplicity of the Gospel, to *open our Mouths boldly*, to *rebuke sharply*, and *with all Authority* (which, by the way, our Adversaries profanely call *Railing*;) that there is a Difference between *Severity* and *Virulency*; that Truth is Then to be most
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vigorously defended, when it most vigorously attacked; that we are to magnify our Office; and not to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; In a word, to put Men in mind of their Duty, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; and whatever be the Consequences, either to Them, or to Ourselves. However, upon This chearful, This feasting, This charitable Occasion, when we meet to promote mutual Love and good Works, Every thing, it will be said, that is harsh and grating should be wholly forborn. Would to God it were never our Duty to say things harsh and grating: No Man, I am sure, less delights in it than I do. As it is, I have already observed, that the original Occasion of This Meeting is, at best, of a mix'd nature, partly joyous, and partly grievous: Every thing therefore which is unpleasant may not, for That Reason, be improper upon This Subject. And if by the Corruption of the World fresh Matter of That Kind daily arises, we are very sorry for it; but must do our Endeavour to hinder the Corruption from spreading. What would become of the Charity to the Widows and Children of Clergymen, and even of Clergymen Themselves, if the Principles I have been warning against should finally prevail? And how naturally Those Principles come to be considered under This Head, concerning the Hardships of the Clergy arising from Those

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of Religion, I have already taken notice. Nor does softning, or smoothing them, tend to mutual Love and good Works ; but the direct contrary ; as it were easy to evince, would the Time permit. For my own Particular, I can with Truth affirm, that if I have taken wrong measures, (and if I have, I beg Pardon of God, and Man) it proceeded not from *Rashness*, and *want of Consideration*, but from *Errour in Judgment*, and *want of Understanding* ; having, with all Coolness, seriously weighed and pondered These things ; That there is not That Person upon Earth for whom I have the least ill Will ; That what I have offered upon This Subject issued from a sincere Zeal for the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Souls, even the Souls of our worst Enemies ; and, that in order to Those Ends, I take This to be the most *Christian*, and the most *prudent*, Method of proceeding.

But the Hardships of the Clergy, more *immediately* to be accommodated to my Text, and considered upon This Occasion, are Those which relate to their *Fortunes only*, by the Necessity of our Constitution it self, as it now stands, and has stood, for almost two Centuries of Years. Whatever Figure the Dignities of the Church, and some few inferiour Preferments may make, it is plain, that upon the Whole, no established Clergy in *Christendom* are so ill provided for
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in Temporals as Those of *England*: So unconscionably excessive was the Pillage just before the Reformation. I say *before* it; for it was neither *at*, nor *since*, the Reformation. And therefore the *Papists* have little Reason to upbraid *Us*, as they continually do, with Those infamous Plunderings of the Church: Because He who made That deplorable Ravage was, in the main, not only of Their Religion, but a fiery, and, in the worst of Senses, a *burning* Zealot for it. And though, for Reasons purely personal, he flung off the Popes's Supremacy, and discarded a few other Corruptions; yet he intended nothing less, than That blessed Alteration of Religion, which immediately followed upon it: not by any Design of His, but by the wise Providence of God, drawing Good out of Evil, and turning not only the *Fierceness*, but the *Lust*, and *Ambition*, of Men to his own Praise. Nor is it any thing strange, that he who did not *abhor Idols*, should at the same time *commit Sacrilege*. If Abbies and Monasteries were to be demolished, and their Lands to be converted to other Uses; yet surely the Tithes, which even They had unjustly impropriated, should have been reserved to the Church, in consideration that the Parish-Clergy, whose Tithes were so impropriated, were before maintain'd by Those Societies. But to strip Parochial Livings,

vings, and starve the Cure of Souls, was such an Instance of Depredation, as no History can parallel, and no Corruptions, or over-grown Wealth, and Power, of the Church, could justify. I speak only of the *original Alienation* of Those Revenues: As to the *Detention* of them *Now*, since they have been so long intermingled with temporal Estates; I pretend to determine Nothing about it, but leave That Matter to the Consciences of the Persons concerned.

This therefore is the real Cause why not only so many Widows and Orphans of Clergymen, but so many Clergymen Themselves are become Objects of Charity. They *never had* a tolerable Provision; and could not *live of the Gospel*; though (if we will believe *St. Paul*) it is most just and equitable that they *should*. Nor can they, to make up This Defect, apply themselves to secular Trades and Professions; because it is contrary to the Nature of their holy Function, and to the Canons of the Church concerning it. This, I say, is the true Cause of the Poverty we are considering: Not that the *Children of Clergymen* are distinguished by being *unfortunate* upon other Accounts; as it is falsely and uncharitably suggested. And that the Income of their Fathers departs with their Lives, is common to Them with Multitudes of the Laity,
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even with the generality of them; and therefore idly urged (as it is by Many) against the Expediency of marrying with Clergymen. Were That all the Inconvenience; They would fare much better, than they do at present. But the Mischief of all is That which I mentioned; not so much that their Revenues are *lost*, when they die; as that they are so *little*, while they live. Upon This Account, I confess, there is much Inconvenience in the Marriage of the Clergy: But so there is in every thing. And the Question is, (as I said) whether there be not more, and greater Inconveniences on the other side? And in This Case too, as well as in That just mentioned, the same may be said of the greatest part of the Laity; and so is not *peculiar* to the Clergy.

Thus miserably scanty is the Temporal Provision for Spiritual Persons in our Church: Insomuch, that were their Revenues to be equally divided, Each of them, one with another, would have no more, than is commonly the annual Acquest of a very ordinary mechanical Tradesman; Half of them have actually no more; and Hundreds of them not a quarter so much. So that This our Corporation for the Relief of their poor Widows and Children is at once the Glory of That great Prince KING CHARLES II. of blessed Memory, who first erected it,
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of *His present Majesty*, who *enlarged* it, and of Those many pious Christians who have, and still do, contribute to support it : And a Reproach to our Country in general, the Families of whose Clergy are by the above-mentioned Corruptions reduced to such a Condition, as to stand in need of it. How many worthy Men, both in Town, and Country, especially the Latter, of great Parts, and Learning, are bury'd in Obscurity, and broken by Penury and Want, so that they have not an Opportunity of shewing That Merit, which would otherwise shine in the World ! But

Haud facile emergunt, quorum virtutibus obstat Res angusta domi. —————

And though, as I observed under the former Part of This Head, the *Wickedness* of some *Laicks* be the chief, nay the only full and adequate, Cause of the Contempt thrown upon *Ecclesiasticks* ; yet certain it is, that the *Poverty* of the *Last* greatly contributes towards it : Which however it would not, could not do ; were it not in Conjunction with the Vices and Irreligion of the *First*. So that the Clergy may apply to Themselves another melancholy Observation of the Heathen Author, just now cited :

Nil

*Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se,
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit.*————

The *Ignorance* of some of the *Clergy* needed not have been assigned by a certain very ingenious, though not very serious, Author, as a Cause of their Contempt, separate from their *Poverty*; The Latter being the chief Cause of the Former. For how can it be expected, that there should be very learned Incumbents upon Livings of Twenty, or Ten Pounds *per Annum*?

Many have a Saying among others equally wise, and religious, with reference to *Us*; That so much is *enough for a Clergyman*; always, you may be sure, naming little enough. But supposing it were twenty times as much; Why for a *Clergyman*, any more than for *any body else*? Are *They* of a different *Make*, or *Mould*, from *Others*? Or if *They* are; Their *Wives* and *Children* are not. Why should not such a one be not only well provided for, but very rich, as well as a *Tradesman*, or a *Lay-Gentleman*? He would probably, at least, make as good a Use of his Wealth, as either of *Them*: And is there any *Absurdity* in the *Thing it self*? Why No: But the Saying is *ill-natured*, *cruel*, *prophane*, and very *wicked*, as well as *senseless*, and *foolish*; And in *That* all the *Luxury* of it consists.

Another

Another Maxim they have among them, nearly akin to the Former; *viz.* That a *Clergyman will be sure to lose nothing that's to be got.* Do they then really think, that We are peculiarly distinguished by This Character? Are We certainly more rapacious in getting, and more tenacious in keeping, than any other Set of Men; than Traders of all Kinds, and Persons possessed of Temporal Estates? Do they in their Consciences believe This? Do they not know the Contrary? The *Poverty* of the Church has been already considered: And were *This* true, *That* might, in some measure at least, plead our Excuse. Besides, We are obliged, not only in *Interest*, but in *Conscience*, to preserve the little Revenues of the Church from being still less; that our Successors may not be injured by our Negligence. But after all, The Fact again is notoriously false: Insomuch, that I fear Most of Us are wanting to our Duty in the other Extreme. It is well known, that being, by the Genius of our Profession, addicted to abstract Thinking, Retirement, and Contemplation, we are both less careful, and less skilful, in secular Affairs, than other Men. *Reason* tells us, that in *Nature* it *should* be so; and *Experience* tells us, that in *Fact* it *is* so. But These are a couple of popular Sayings, proceeding from the Follies and Vices of Those who use them;

them; and doing much Mischief to Christianity; utter'd either with no Meaning, or with a very ill one; very often too utter'd in the Company of Clergymen; and so as inconsistent with good Manners, as they are with Religion.

Since I am upon the Subject of These choice Maxims concerning the Clergy, I will mention one more; which is, *That they come by what they have very easily.* An Assertion again so notoriously false, that it would be Folly to go about to disprove it. Surely These, and such like, foolish Aphorisms would be laid aside; did Those who use them speak their real Thoughts, after having considered; What an Expence is required for the Education of Persons dedicated to the Work of the Ministry, generally their whole Fortunes, and very often much more; so that for the most part they expend as much as would doubly purchase what they have, and yet labour for all their Lives long, with extreme Fatigue both of Body and Mind: That the Death of Many is occasioned by Those Labours, and for That very Reason their *Children* are much the sooner *Fatherless*, and their *Wives Widows*: That tho' they have an Advantage over Others, of an equal Fortune, by their ingenuous Education, and Acquaintance and

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Interest in the World, by which they are somewhat more likely to procure a Provision for their Children ; yet That is at least ballanced by their coming late into their Preferments, or dying soon after it, even when they come into them earlier : That their Hospitality, and Charity, by Both which, in proportion to their Circumstances, they are generally distinguish'd from Others, greatly tend to impoverish them, and to make Them, and their Families, Objects of Charity Themselves ; the Minister of the Parish, especially in Country Villages, being of course resorted to, upon all Occasions of That Nature : That their Dues lying intermingled with the Possessions of Others, Those Others are hardly perswaded to think they are not their Own ; from whence it comes to pass, that they are with great Charge and Difficulty collected, and a great part of them as easily, as they are frequently, fraudulently, and sacrilegiously, kept back, and withheld from them : That their Kindness very often meets with most ungrateful Returns from ignorant, and wicked People, who owe their Subsistence, and perhaps Their Lives to them ; (for, without venturing too far, or being Empiricks in the noble Art of Medicine, Clergymen may by their Learning be in some degree qualify'd to be Physicians of Bodies, as well of

of Souls, and generally do give Physick to the Sick, as well as Food to the Hungry: That it is not uncommon for a Person of considerable Birth, and of extraordinary Merit in all respects, to be trampled upon, and abused, together with his Wife and Children, by illiterate, unmannered, purse-proud Peasants, purely because he is poor, and a Clergyman: In a word, That very many Parochial Cures in This Nation are so miserably unendowed, that, with regard to Them, it would be scarce Sense for a Man to make even That wretched Request which it was prophesied should be made by the Posterity of *Eli*, as a Punishment for the Sins of their Ancestors; *Put me, I pray thee, into one of Those Priests Offices; that I may eat a piece of bread.* 1 Sam. 2.36.

This is the hard Measure of the Clergy in their Fortunes: And, as if This were not bad enough, they must likewise be slandered, and vilify'd in their Reputation. A fair Requital for the Expence necessarily previous to the Work of the Ministry, and for all their Care, and Kindness, their Labours and Watchings, in the actual Exercise of it. According to the Account given by some Men; the Clergy of *England* are as rich, crafty, powerful, and tyrannical as Those of the Popish Countrys. Whereas

in Truth our Church pretends to no Power in Temporals ; and has for some time had little more than the Name of it even in Spirituals : Her Clergy, generally speaking, being artless, and undefining, to a Fault, and not enough skilled in secular Affairs. Much indeed has been done for their Relief by pious Benefactors, (may the God of Heaven return their Kindness an hundred fold into the bosoms of Them and Theirs :) Especially by our *late* most excellent, and truly religious, QUEEN ; whose Piety shall be *had in everlasting remembrance* ; and our Childrens Children shall *call her blessed*. But so great is the Evil ; that there is still too much Room for farther Remedy. Which brings us to the Sixth and Last Observation from my Text ; *viz.* That the Temporal Circumstances of Spiritual Persons in This Nation being (as we have seen) very hard and unequal ;

VI. Good and pious Christians, whether Laity, or Clergy, will, according to their Abilities, contribute to relieve and support them. We cannot, as *Elisha* did, relieve Widows and Orphans by *Miracle* ; but we may by *Charity* : Charity, which is greater than the *Fides miraculorum* it self, more
ex-

excellent than the *Faith, that removes Mountains*. *Elisba* indeed was more than ordinarily obliged to be concerned for the Persons and Families of Prophets; because He himself was not only One, but the Chief of them. Yet *All* truly pious Persons in the Jewish Church ever had, and all such in the Christian Church have, and ever will have, a very great Regard to Both. Be helpful and assisting therefore, liberal and bountiful, to the indigent Prophets, while they live; and to their Relicts, and Orphans, after they are dead: And that not only while they are Partakers of This our Corporation-Charity; but *before* they come, and *that they may never* come to stand in need of it. Whenever, and which way soever it be; great is the *peculiar and distinguishing* Excellence of *This* Charity. If *he that hath pity upon the poor*, in general, *lendeth unto the Lord*; how much more does He, that supplies the Wants of his Ministers who wait at his Altar, and of Those who are most nearly related to them? How much more emphatically will the great Highpriest of our profession declare, that (as he condescends to insinuate) he is even personally obliged to Those who have *Thus* abounded in good Works; *Verily I say unto You, Inasmuch*
as

as ye did it unto the least of one of THESE my Brethren, my Brethren in the Priesthood, ye did it unto me. Let the inestimable Benefits they confer excite you to be beneficent to *Them*; and give the *Bread which perisheth* to the Persons, and Families, of Those by whose hands the *Bread of Life* hath been so often administered. It is undoubtedly Their indispensable Duty, to endeavour, by all lawful, and honest Means, that their Wives and Children may never be Pensioners to This Society. But if, by the afflicting Providence of God, they become Candidates for it, and are unhappily qualify'd to be duly elected; They are *Widows*, and Orphans, *indeed*; and of all such the most proper Objects of Charity. The Father of the Family is dead, probably by the very pains he took in labouring to save Souls: His Relict, and Children, besides the Loss of so dear a Relation, have the additional Calamity of extreme Poverty, occasioned by That very Loss, which is, even in it self, so grievous, and afflictive; are driven from their *long-accustomed Home*, which, however *mean*, is *naturally loved*, and *with regret forsaken*; and peradventure are uncertain *where to lay their Heads*, within a few days after He
is

is buried. So that to Such all good Christians should have a more particular View, when they put up That Petition in our excellent Litany ; “ That “ it may please thee to defend, and provide for, the fatherless Children, and “ Widows, and all that are desolate and “ oppressed : ” And that yet more especially in These corrupt Times into which We are fallen ; when, by the Growth of Profaneness and Irreligion, and Principles destructive of sacred Orders, the Clergy labour under so many other Pressures above-mentioned ; and the Church her self is almost *become as a Widow*.

But I am insensibly sliding back to the foregoing general Head ; and must return to the Subject of This. We make no invidious Comparisons between the Contributions which have been made by Ecclesiasticks, and Laicks, to This Fund of Charity : Of what Profession soever they be, may they all find their Reward in Heaven. It is, however, no very cogent Argument (though by Some strongly urged) that *We* should contribute most ; because our Wives, and Children, may come to partake of it : There is, I confess, something in This ; though it is, at best, but an uncomfortable Consideration. But We contribute

tribute *towards* it; trusting in God, that, for That very Reason, our Wives, and Children, will be the *less likely* to partake of it. Be that as it will; certain it is, that, in proportion to our Abilities, the highest Obligation lies upon *Us*, who are both Sons of Clergymen, and Clergymen ourselves: The Next upon Such as are of That Order, though not *in* That Relation: The Third upon Such as are *in* That Relation, though not *of* That Order: And the Last upon Those to whom Neither of the aforesaid Characters belongs. And yet it may so happen, that the *Last mentioned*, may, in consideration of their more *plentiful Fortunes*, be obliged *most of all*: And so in proportion of the two intermediate Divisions. And to excite Those to This Charity, who are Laicks, and have no Relation to any Ecclesiastick; it may not be improper for Them to consider, that, since the Reformation, the greatest Mischiefs have ever been brought upon the State, and People, by Those who have been the greatest Enemies to the Church, and Clergy; And so on the Reverse: That the Children of Clergymen are incorporated into all Trades, and Professions; and as many Sons of the Clergy are Laymen, so many Sons of the Laity are Clergymen: That

That, however, in This we All agree, that we are All Christians, and Sons of the Church, though not of the Clergy. Let them, I say, consider These things; ever remembering That of our Blessed Saviour; *He that receiveth a* Matth. 10. 41. 42.

Prophet in the name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophet's reward: And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, (and much more, if he gives something considerable) in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose his reward.

Nor ought the present distressed State of Affairs to deter us from This good Work; but rather to have the contrary Effect: That so we may avert God's further Judgments, which Now hang black and threatening over us. And indeed the best Prospect we have is opened to us by publick Charities: By which This Age, however corrupt in other Respects, is, to its immortal Honour, eminently distinguished. But whatever be our Lot in This World; let us do our Duty, trust in God; and be chearful, and of good Courage, particularly do our Duty in the Instance I have been now recommending: By which means we shall have the easier Admittance *into everlasting Habitations*; even Those Habitations, where the Distinction between Clergy and Laity will be abolished; Where there will be *no more Widows*

nor Orphans; No more Sorrow, nor Crying,
 nor Pain; No more Marrying, or being gi-
ven in Marriage; No more Controversy in
 Religion, nor Corruption of any Sort;
 Where not only Prophecy of all Kinds, as
 well as Faith, and Hope, but even *This*
Kind of Charity itself shall forever cease;
 and the Church of Christ be completely
Triumphant.

E R R A T A.

Page 39. Line 24. *dele* neither ashamed;
and for nor, *read* not.

F I N I S.



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